

# Preparing for Pandemic Influenza



## What to do

### Protect your health

---

#### Prevent the spread of germs

The flu virus is spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes or touches things that others use. Do these simple, effective things to help protect yourself and others:

**Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.** It is best not to use your bare hand. Cough into your sleeve or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue.

**Wash your hands.** The best way to protect yourself from viruses is to wash your hands often. Soap and water are best, but when they are not available, use alcohol-based hand gel or disposable wipes.

**Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.** The flu virus is often spread when a person touches something that has the virus on it and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.

**Stay home when you're sick or have flu symptoms.** Drink extra water, get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed.

#### Home care

**Learn basic care-giving.** Know how to care for someone with a fever, body aches and lung congestion. During a flu pandemic you will be provided with specific instructions for caring for those who are sick as well as information about when to call a health care provider.

**Learn how to recognize and treat dehydration.** Watch for weakness, fainting, dry mouth, dark concentrated urine, low blood pressure or a fast pulse when lying or sitting down. These are signs of dehydration. The flu virus causes the body to lose water through fever and sweating. To prevent dehydration, it is very important for a person with the flu to drink a lot of water—up to 12 glasses a day.

**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND  
HEALTHIER WASHINGTON

# What to do

## At home

---

### Keep these items in your home

- **Enough food and water per person for a week or more**—Choose foods that will keep for a long time and do not require refrigeration or cooking. Include a non-electric can opener.
- **Medications**—Keep at least a week's supply of the medicines you take regularly.
- **Items to relieve flu symptoms**—Stock medicines for fever, such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen. Cold packs, blankets and humidifiers will also be useful. Have extra water and fruit juices on hand in case someone is sick—the flu virus causes dehydration, and drinking extra fluids helps.
- **Items for personal comfort**—Store at least a week's supply of soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toilet paper and cleaning products.
- **Activities for yourself and your children**—Include books, crafts, board games, art supplies and other things to do. Include things that do not require electricity.
- **Cash**—Banks may not always be open and cash machines may not always work.

- **Pet supplies**—Remember food, water and litter.
- **Cell phone or regular phone with a cord**—Cordless phones will not work if the power is out.
- **Large trash bags**—Garbage service may be disrupted or postponed for many days.

### Make household and family emergency plans

- Agree on a point of contact where all family members can check in if you are separated during an emergency.
- Decide who will take care of children if schools are closed.
- Plan to limit the number of trips you take to shop or to run errands. Also, remember public transportation routes and times may be limited.
- Think about how you would care for people in your family who have disabilities if support services are not available.
- Be prepared to get by for at least a week on what you have at home. Stores may not be open or may have limited supplies.

## Learn more

---

**Washington State Department of Health** — [www.doh.wa.gov/panflu/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/panflu/)

**Local public health agencies in Washington state** — [www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/)

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** — [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** — [www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic/)

**World Health Organization (WHO)** — [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)